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Kennedy's Capitol Report

Program helps hunters give back to community

JEFFERSON CITY — With the hunting season under way, it's important to know about a valuable program for Missouri hunters. Last year, more than 96,000 pounds of venison were donated by deer hunters to Missouri's needy through Share the Harvest.

Created in 1992 by the Missouri Department of Conservation, Share the Harvest is a program that lets hunters donate venison to Missourians in need of red meat. Through the cooperation of hunters, processing plants, local service organizations and the Conservation Department, Share the Harvest helps fight the hunger problem that is plaguing residents of our state.

“As vice chairman of the Missouri Sportsmen Caucus, I think it's important to encourage hunters to participate in Share the Harvest,” said Sen. Harry Kennedy, D-St. Louis. “Rather than letting any extra meat go to waste, we can work together to reduce Missouri's hunger problem. As the holiday season approaches, we must not forget about Missouri's most vulnerable citizens.”

Last year, in addition to partial donations, hunters donated 1,000 whole deer to Share the Harvest. This year's goal is to get 3,000 whole deer while continuing to seek partial donations. To encourage donation this year, the Conservation Federation of Missouri has raised the processing fee payback for whole deer donations from \$20 to \$35.

To donate meat to the program, hunters can take their venison to an approved processing plant, which will package and store the meat until it's transported to a charitable agency for distribution. For more information and a listing of participating processors, call the Department of Conservation at (573) 751-4115, or visit www.conservation.state.mo.us/hunt/deer/share.